THE GENESIS
OF THE
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

F. PATTON, D. D.

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James Lyon
Richmond Va

THE GENESIS

OF THE

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY:

OR,

A Brief History

OF THE

EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH OCCASIONED THE CALLING OF THAT VENERABLE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES AND CHRISTIAN STATESMEN.

A CENTENNIAL OFFERING

TO THE SABBATH-SCHOOLS AND YOUTH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE meeting of the Westminster Assembly, July 1st, 1643, was not an isolated event, but one that grew out of a controversy as old as the English Reformation. Kings and queens, lords and commons, clergy and laity, were parties in the strife. The conflict between Prelates and Puritans has long since left the halls of Parliament and the courts of royalty. If there is any collision between opposing creeds in modern times, it is confined to ecclesiastical circles. But the fruits of a past conflict that once agitated the courts of kings and the halls of legislation, as well as ecclesiastical assemblies, are still visible and abiding. Puritanism, like the century plant, having survived the frosts of many winters, gave birth to some beautiful flowers, which do not "blush unseen, nor waste their sweetness on the desert air." That civil and religious liberty, which has become the inheritance of the Anglo-Saxon race, budded and bloomed on the Puritan plant. When the Philistines of despotism seized the ark

of civil and religious liberty, it was rescued from hopeless captivity by the strong arms and fearless hearts of Puritan patriots and statesmen. The people of the United States, as well as Great Britain and her dependencies, owe a debt of gratitude to a Puritan ancestry which has not been duly acknowledged. But my task is an humbler one than that of writing a constitutional history of Great Britain or the United States.

Another flower that grew and matured on the same parental stem was the Westminster standards of the Presbyterian churches of the English speaking world. These clear, logical, elaborate and scriptural formulas of the Presbyterian faith are the matured fruits of a controversy that had continued for more than a century in a Bible reading and believing age. Their history is interwoven with that of the Reformation in England. Without a knowledge of such history no one can duly appreciate the purposes for which the Westminster Assembly was called or the nature of the duties imposed on that venerable body. There are many books which furnish the needed information, but they are too voluminous, or are not of a character to attract our young people to a perusal of their pages. A brief history of that eventful period is a desideratum in

the literature of our Church, so far as the libraries of our Sabbath-schools and the wants of our young people are concerned.

The author of these pages "has done what he could to fill this vacuum in our literature." The authorities consulted have been mostly Hume, Macaulay, Green, Knight, Neel, Hetherington and Mitchell. He has not incumbered his pages with many references, as the book is not designed for those who make history a special study.

THE GENESIS

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WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

CHAPTER I.

The Dawn of the Reformation under Henry the Eighth.

ACCORDING to D'Aubigne, "the Reformation in England, perhaps to a greater extent than that of the Continent, was effected by the Word of God." No such leaders as Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, or Knox, who accomplished so much by personal influence, appeared in England. The light kindled by Wickliffe in the fourteenth century perhaps left a faint glimmer in the kingdom, which was never entirely extinguished. But the introduction of the study of the Greek language in the English universities and the perusal of the Greek Testament as published by Erasmus, opened the eyes of many scholars to see the difference between primitive Christianity and the prevailing superstition. William Tyn-

dale, an Oxford student and a pupil of Erasmus, became a diligent student of the New Testament in Greek. He also met with some of the writings of Luther. He became imbued with the idea of translating the Word of God into the language of the people. He soon discovered that a translation could not be safely attempted in his native land. He withdrew to the Continent, and there secretly labored to achieve the grand work of his life. As early as 1526 the first edition of the New Testament in English was published and sent over to England. It was widely circulated, and other editions followed. After the martyrdom of Tyndale, who was burnt at the stake at Valvorden, Coverdale published the whole Bible in English, and completed the work which Tyndale was not permitted to see entirely finished. The writings of Luther were also read by many scholars. The voice of that bold Reformer, which shook the papacy to the centre, reverberated along the shores of Great Britain with awakening power. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." But while there is truth in the statement of D'Aubigne, the language of Macaulay is also true, who declares that in no other country was the ecclesiastical revolution to so great an extent directed and modified by govern-

mental influence. Many co-operating causes favored the Reformation, but the quarrel of Henry VIII. with the pope resulted in giving the Church of England her peculiar characteristics.

Arthur, the elder son of Henry VII., was at an early age betrothed to Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. Arthur died soon after the nuptial ceremony, and the youthful Henry was persuaded by his father to marry the virgin bride of his deceased brother. A dispensation from the pope was obtained to legalize such a marriage, and the nuptial rites were consummated. Henry lived after this in apparent contentment with his queen for twenty years. But Catherine took into her service as one of the maids of honor, Anne Boleyn, who was young, beautiful, fascinating, and worthy of esteem and admiration. She had resided at the court of the French King, where she became the favorite of Margaret of Valois, who had espoused the cause of the Protestants. Anne returned to England a Protestant at heart. After making the acquaintance of this young lady, the king began to entertain scruples about the lawfulness of his marriage. The courtiers gave such counsel as they knew he wished to hear, and he was encouraged to make application to the pope for a divorce

The wily pontiff foresaw that by granting the petition he would offend Charles V. of Spain, the nephew of Catherine; on the other hand, by refusing, he would give umbrage to the king of England, whom he had honored with the title of "defender of the faith," because he had written a book in opposition to Luther and in defence of the Catholic Church. To avoid giving offence to either party, the pope sent back an evasive answer. This lead to long and tedious negotiations with the court of Rome, which it is not necessary to relate. The consequence was, that Henry became offended at the duplicity of the Roman pontiff, and resolved to separate his kingdom from all allegiance to a foreign power. A supple Parliament was called together, who were easily persuaded to grant the demands of the king. The king was made the head of the Church of England, and it was made treason to acknowledge the supremacy of the pope or to deny that of the monarch who wore the English crown.

The Anglican Church was thus separated from Rome, and the first step taken towards the Reformation at the dictation of the monarch and by an act of Parliament. It is remarkable that the great body of the clergy acquiesced in a proceeding so revolutionary and fatal to a fundamental

tenet of the Catholic faith. The supremacy of the pope is a principle vital to the Church of Rome. But the clergy of that day were not distinguished for intelligence, piety, or virtue of any kind. Their tenacity of principles was weak and wavering, but they clung to the emoluments of office with a grasp that revolutions could not shake. But while an essential principle of the Catholic faith was set aside, there was at first no outward change in anything else pertaining to the Church. Every doctrine, rite, ceremony, with the accustomed administrators, remained as they were. The king was careful to use his authority to enforce uniformity and prevent any innovation. It was impossible under the new regime to be a good Catholic or Protestant. Those who denied the supremacy of the king, as every good Catholic was bound to do, was tried and condemned for treason. Every one who openly professed the doctrines of the Reformers was condemned for heresy. On one day six men were borne in the same cart from the same prison to the same place of execution. Three of the condemned criminals were Catholics, three were Lutherans. The former were hung for treason, the latter burnt at the stake as heretics. Bishop Fisher, who had grown gray in the service of his church, and Sir

Thomas More in the service of his king, were sentenced to the block for denying the right of Henry to play the *role* of pope in the Church of England. It is a painful task to read of the hanging, beheading and burning which disgraced the reign of this cruel tyrant.

But some things were done by Henry which prepared the way for the reformation in the reign of Edward An English version of the Scriptures was fastened by a chain to the pulpit of each parish church. In many parishes the people assembled in crowds to read or hear read the Word of God. The monasteries were suppressed, and their property confiscated. These religious houses had absorbed a large part of the national wealth, and had become the abodes of idleness and vice. While neither Scripture nor sacred philosophy justify the existence of such institutions, the cruel and arbitrary manner in which they were often suppressed need not be defended. It was done more to gratify the covetousness of the king and his greedy courtiers than to promote the cause of religion No English king was ever vested with more absolute power than Henry VIII. He was kind and pleasant to those who served him with servility or ministered to his pleasures. But those who crossed his imperious will plead in vain for

justice or mercy. Of his six wives two were divorced, two beheaded, one died a natural death, and one survived him.

His most intimate friends and counsellors, upon whom for a season he lavished riches and honor, often became the unhappy victims of his displeasure. While he assumed absolute control of ecclesiastical affairs, he trampled on all the precepts of the gospel, and seemed utterly destitute of the spirit it inculcates. Dickens closes the history of his reign with the following harsh indictment: "The plain truth is that he was a most intolerable ruffian, a disgrace to human nature, and a blot of blood and grease upon the history of England."

CHAPTER II.

Edward the Sixth.

EDWARD was only nine years and four months old at the death of his father, but was immediately crowned as king, and the government was administered in his name. Henry VIII., in his will, appointed sixteen regents to act as guardians of the young king during his minority. Twelve other noblemen were associated with them as counsellors. The government was virtually in the hands of these twenty-eight guardians and counsellors. They organized themselves into a council, with the Duke of Somerset, the king's uncle, as Lord Protector. A majority of this council had secretly imbibed the principles of the Protestants. Like Nicodemus, they had smothered their convictions from fear of the king Dr. Cox, the tutor of Edward, was a Protestant, and he made a zealous convert of his royal pupil. The council, under the lead of Somerset, resolved to finish the work of reforming the Church, which was already separated from Rome. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, seconded the wishes of the council, and his office gave him power and

influence. He prepared a book of homilies, which embodied the principles of the Protestant faith, to be read in all the churches. Men of piety and learning were sent over the kingdom to preach in all the congregations and explain the doctrines of the new faith. A prayer-book and complete liturgy were soon published, adopted by Parliament, and their use enforced by pains and penalties. A doctrinal system containing forty-two articles soon followed. In a brief period the Church of England was made what she has continued ever since to be in government, doctrine, rites, and ceremonies. Under Elizabeth the forty-two articles were reduced to thirty-nine, and some other trivial changes made, but the essential features of the Church were not altered.

There are some facts in relation to the Reformation in England which should be carefully pondered by the student of ecclesiastical history. The leaders were mostly laymen, who acted in the name of the king, who had been made supreme head of the Church. The people were not consulted, but they were required to acquiesce in the innovations proposed, and receive such teachers and such teaching as those in authority imposed. The ecclesiastical authorities, as a body or in a lawful assembly, were not con-

sulted. The great body of the priesthood were at heart Catholics. Had they been consulted, they would have advised a speedy reconciliation with Rome instead of a wider separation. The Parliament acted a very subordinate part in the new movement. They obeyed the dictates of the council, that exercised the authority of the Crown. Among the twenty-eight members of the council there were only three ecclesiastics. One of these, Cranmer, was a decided Protestant; one, Tonstall, Bishop of Durham, was a more decided Catholic; the third, Dr. Walton, Dean of Canterbury, was a mere cipher, and has left no record of the part he acted. Cranmer became a leader of those who favored a reformation, and Tonstall of the opposition. A majority of the council was on the side of Cranmer; they pushed the work of reformation the whole length it reached under Edward; but when the changes recommended became the law of the land by the authority of the council or the Parliament, the clergy, with a few exceptions, conformed. They were a pliant and manageable fraternity in those days. They acquiesced in the changes effected by Henry VIII., and in the greater innovations of Edward VI. They returned to their allegiance to the pope at the command of Mary, and they

forsook him again at the bidding of Elizabeth. Their tenacity for church benefices was stern and unyielding, but principles were held with a gentle tenure. Such men were the natural enemies of the Puritans, whose self-sacrificing spirit and lofty devotion to principle and love of truth they could neither understand nor appreciate. The Catholics who suffered for their faith were a more noble body than many who took refuge in the Protestant ranks for the sake of gain.

There were at this time in England many learned and pious teachers of religion who were sincere Protestants. Their disciples were daily increasing under their teaching. Coverdale, Rogers, Hooper, Bradford and others who had fled to the Continent to escape the stake in the former reign, now returned. Ridley and Latimer preached with great power and acceptance to the people. It was the real Protestantism behind the throne that enabled the council to effect their purpose. But the real Protestants had no legislative power. They could give advice and use moral suasion, but nothing more. There were two parties laboring for the reformation of the Church. One was composed of politicians and statesmen who had no faith in popery, and wished to deliver their country from the dominion of a foreign priesthood,

as well as from ignorance, vice and superstition. But in this party there was very little piety, and they were swayed by political motives more than by religious convictions. They knew that the great body of the people were at heart more favorable to the old faith than the new. To reconcile the people to such innovations as they thought most important, they advocated no changes but such as were essential to the Protestant faith. They were willing to leave the outward frame of the Church as it was, and make as few changes in rites and ceremonies as the interests of Protestantism might tolerate. The other party wished to remove from the Church every excrescence of human invention, and fashion all things after the model of the New Testament and primitive Christianity. Had this party ruled, the Church of England would have been reformed after a model then seen at Geneva, and at a subsequent period in Scotland. Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a mediator between the two parties. An extract from Macaulay will present the truth in his forcible style:

"But as the government needed the support of the Protestants, so the Protestants needed the government. Much was therefore given up by both sides; a union was effected, and the fruit of

this union was the Church of England. The man who took the chief part in settling the conditions of the alliance was Thomas Cranmer. He was the representative of both parties that at that time needed each other's assistance. He was at once a divine and a statesman. In his character as divine he was perfectly ready to go as far in the way of change as any Swiss or Scottish reformers. In his character as statesman he was desirous to preserve the organization which had during many ages served the purposes of the bishops of Rome, and might now serve equally well the purposes of the English kings and their ministers. This temper and his understanding eminently fitted him to act as mediator. Saintly in his professions, unscrupulous in his dealings, zealous for nothing, bold in speculation, a coward and time-server in action, a placable enemy, and a luke-warm friend, he was in every way qualified to arrange the terms of the coalition between the religious and the worldly enemies of popery. To this day the constitution of the doctrines and services of the Church retain the visible marks of the compromise from which she sprung. She occupies a middle position between the Church of Rome and Geneva. Her doctrinal confession and discourses, composed by Protestants, set

forth principles of theology in which Calvin and Knox could find scarcely a word to disapprove. Her prayers and thanksgivings, derived from the ancient liturgies, are very generally such that Bishop Fisher and Cardinal Pole might have heartily joined in them."

The worldly or court party adopted the doctrinal confession because they were indifferent about all doctrines, and wished to satisfy and secure the aid of the religious party who valued gospel truth above all price. This party having obtained all they could ask in the way of a doctrinal creed, were willing to make concessions to the court party in respect to all the externals of the Church. They were persuaded that the time had not come for a complete reformation of the Church, and they gave heed to those who warned them against the impolicy and peril of too sudden innovations. Bishops and archbishops, deans and archdeacons, and all officers, remained as they were. The robes of officials and the ordination services were continued with slight modifications. As little change in the forms of worship was introduced as the essential principles of Protestantism would allow.

In this way Catholic England was made Protestant. In a few places there was some commo-

tion, but the strong arm of the government soon restored order. The office-bearers in the church, who conformed to the new regulations, as a majority did, retained their places. Those who refused were suspended, and, in some cases, treated with severity. The worldly party fully accomplished their purposes, and desired nothing better. The religious party could thank God for what was done, but looked forward with hope to a more propitious day. The doctrine first taught by Bancroft towards the close of the century, that the office of bishop is an essential factor in the organization of the Church, that his apostolic hands alone makes an ordination valid, was not thought of by the first reformers in England Episcopacy was retained as a wise policy, not as an essential feature of the Church. They recognized the churches on the continent, where Episcopal ordination was not known, as true churches. They held Calvin and his co-workers in the highest esteem.

I will again quote from the historian Macaulay, as he was a communicant in the Church of England, and not a partisan writing to justify dissent:

"Cranmer had indeed plainly avowed his conviction that in primitive times there was no distinction between bishops and priests, and that the

laying on of hands was altogether unnecessary. Nothing, however, so thoroughly distinguished the Church of England from the churches of the continent as the relation in which she stood to the monarchy. The king was the head. Cranmer had declared in emphatic terms that God had immediately committed to Christian princes the whole cure of their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God's Word for the cure of souls as concerning things political.

"By the royal authority alone her prelates were appointed. By the royal authority alone her convocations were summoned, regulated, prorogued and dissolved; without the royal sanction, her canons have no force."

Edward VI. died at the age of sixteen, after a short reign of five years. Had he lived, some think he would have carried the reformation farther. He was succeeded by Mary, and a bloody persecution, which we reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The Persecution in the Reign of Mary, 1553–1558.

THE reign of Mary furnishes the darkest page in English history. We read of little else than bloody executions for treason or heresy. Her attachment to the Catholic faith and opposition to all the reformatory measures of the age were natural, as she took sides with her mother, and knew that the divorce case had alienated her father from the Church of Rome. Her cruelty was the result of education in her father's court, where from childhood her mind was made familiar with bloody executions. On account of the known bigotry of the young princess, and her hatred of the Protestant cause, the young king on his deathbed was persuaded to change the succession, and nominate Lady Jane Grey as his successor. Lady Jane was the granddaughter of Henry VII., and a collateral heir of the throne. The Duke of Northumberland, father-in-law to this most amiable and pious young lady, was the moving spirit in effecting this ill-advised transaction. Cranmer

joined Northumberland in a scheme which proved so disastrous to all the parties concerned. Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed queen on the death of Edward, as directed in his will. But the people and the nobles rallied around Mary. The crown was placed on her head, and Jane, with all who favored her coronation, were imprisoned in the tower. From her window the unhappy princess saw the headless body of her husband thrown into a cart, and the workmen busy in erecting a scaffold for herself. A priest was sent by the queen to hear her last confession, and receive her back into the Catholic Church before execution. She nobly answered the priest: "I ground my faith upon God's Word, and not upon the Church." Some writers suppose that the queen might have granted a reprieve if she had accepted the Catholic's faith. At the place of execution she tied a kerchief over her eyes, and asked some one to guide her head to the block. Her last words were, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." So perished one of the noblest, purest and most amiable members of the Tudor family, who had never desired the crown, but who was the innocent victim of the ambition of Northumberland and the misguided zeal of others. But the second act in the bloody drama of this misguided queen

was on a larger scale. Mary was negotiating a marriage with Philip of Spain. The people of England were bitterly opposed to the match, and feared it would make England a mere province of the Spanish kingdom. Sir Thomas Wyatt gathered an army in Kent, and marched to London with the avowed purpose of preventing the marriage. He was disappointed in not receiving the reinforcements he anticipated, and was compelled to surrender. He and about a hundred accomplices were executed. There was a gallows at every gate and thoroughfare in London. Forty-eight men were hanged at nineteen different places. Others were sent back to Kent, the centre of rebellion, for execution. The Princess Elizabeth was imprisoned on suspicion of being a secret accomplice of Wyatt, and narrowly escaped the block. She was after some months released through the intercession of powerful friends and the absence of all proof of her guilt.

The third and last act in the bloody drama acted during the reign of this relentless queen was the most cruel, sanguinary, and protracted of all. The darling project of her reign was the restoration of popery and the utter extirpation of the Protestant religion. Spanish priests and the most malignant spirits among the English priest-

hood were her counsellors. Her natural disposition, the bitter memory of her mother's wrongs, and her long suppressed hatred of the new faith and her superstitious attachment to the old, made her a willing listener to the savage advice of merciless bigots, who recommended fire and fagot as the only effectual remedy for the cure of heresy. An embassy was sent to Rome, and Cardinal Pole, who was of royal blood, and was living in exile at Rome, was sent over as the pope's legate. The cardinal sailed up the Thames in a gorgeous barge, with a silver cross at the prow, and landed in London amidst the joyful acclamation of the Catholic party. On a day appointed, the Cardinal took his seat in the house of Parliament, under a magnificent canopy by the side of the Queen and the King of Spain, her husband. A packed Parliament had been assembled by the labors and good management of partisan zeal. This noble body kneeled before the royal party and the legate, humbly begging that the kingdom might be absolved from the guilt of heresy and restored to the Catholic family. The benevolent cardinal granted the absolution, and England was once more a daughter of the Church of Rome. All the persecuting statutes against the Lollards repealed under Edward were re-enacted. It re-

flects some honor on that sycophantic Parliament that thirty-seven members refused to vote for those persecuting edicts. The work of destruction now began in earnest. John Rogers, who had assisted Tyndale in translating the Scriptures, and whose piety, learning, and eloquence placed him in the front rank of the reforming party, was the first martyr. He was burnt at Smithfield. Bishop Hooper was next condemned, but sent back to Gloucester to be burnt in front of the Cathedral where he had so often preached. Sanders, Bradford, and Taylor were the next victims. A burning that gratified the queen and attracted great attention took place at Oxford, where Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer sealed their faith with the blood of martyrdom. These three had acted a conspicuous part in the reforming measures of the late reign, and were most cordially hated by the party in power. When Ridley and Latimer reached the place of execution, a priest mounted a platform and delivered a discourse to the people from the text, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." After this speaker had finished his lecture on charity, the excellence of his doctrine was illustrated by heaping fagots

around these holy martyrs and consuming their bodies in the flames. The aged Latimer said to Ridley as they piled the fagots around him: "Be of good courage, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day, by God's grace, light such a candle in England as shall never be put out." Cranmer did not meet his sentence so nobly as his companions in suffering. It was insidiously hinted to him that recantation would save his life. He yielded to the temptation, and signed a paper, in which he abjured the Protestant faith. But the queen cherished the most intense hatred towards the person of Cranmer. By his advice her mother was divorced. By his advice Lady Jane Grey was made the heir to the crown. In addition to all this, he had been a conspicuous actor in all the Protestant innovations. Nothing but his death in the most cruel way could appease the hatred of the queen. When Cranmer found that death at the stake was inevitable, he recanted his recantation, and died a Protestant. At the place of execution he drew a paper from his sleeve which he had written secretly, and read, with a firm voice to the assembled multitude, the statement that the fear of death had forced from him a false confession, and

that he hoped for mercy through the merits of Christ alone. As the flames rose up and covered his body he held his right hand in the blaze, exclaiming, "This hand has offended." These were his last words. His heroic death, after it was found to be inevitable, saved his reputation among Protestants.

I will quote a brief extract from Knight's History of England, which gives a summary of the facts concerning the Marian persecution: "These executions were not sharp and passionate outbursts of ecclesiastical power, exasperated by popular fury or regal tyranny, hurried into extremities by the dread of rebellion. They were the calm and deliberate exposition of the principles by which England was to be governed under the Roman Catholic Church and sovereigns. The appetite for blood was to be sustained in healthful energy, and not sickened by inordinate meals. In 1555, seventy-one heretics were executed; in 1556, sixty-three; in 1557, eighty-eight; in 1558, forty. There was also a nice adjustment of the victims to the local demands. We are accustomed to hear of the fires of Smithfield as if London had a very undue proportion of the instruction of such sights. But in those four years

during which London and Middlesex saw fifty-five executions, Kent had fifty-four, Essex fifty-one, Sussex forty-one, Sussex and Norfolk thirty-one, Gloucester nine, Warwick six, while thirty-three were distributed over thirteen other districts. Nor was the lesson of fagots confined to bishops and priests. Staype makes a total of the burnings to be two hundred and eighty-eight, Speed two hundred and seventy seven, and he classifies them as five bishops, twenty-one divines, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artificers, one hundred husbandmen, servants and laborers, twenty-six wives, twenty widows, nine unmarried women, two boys, and two infants. No selection could have been more impartial." According to this statement all places and all classes of people in England were duly warned of the fate that awaited heretics.

About eight hundred Protestants fled to the continent. Many others were confined to prisons and escaped the fire by the timely death of the queen. The horrors of the persecution under the bloody Mary explains the zeal of the Puritans in opposing every relic of popery. The memory of these horrid executions nerved the arms of patriots who battled for religion, liberty, native land, and all that is dear to the human heart when the

"invincible Armada" darkened the British Channel in the reign of Elizabeth. The memory of the days of Mary turned the heart of all England from James II. to William of Orange.

The Marian persecution after all planted Protestantism on a firm and enduring basis in Great Britain.

CHAPTER IV.

The Re-Establishment of Protestantism and the Rise of Puritanism in the Reign of Elizabeth.

QUEEN ELIZABETH was publicly proclaimed the rightful heir to the crown on the same day on which Mary died, November 17, 1558. There was universal joy over both events. The nation was sickened by scenes of suffering and torture, which savages could scarcely tolerate and all Christians abhor. There was a general expectation that the prison doors would be opened, the exiles would return, and the fires kindled by ruthless bigotry would be extinguished under the auspices of the young queen. Elizabeth was a Protestant more from policy than principle. Had the pope recognized her title to the throne, and kindly solicited her to remain in the Catholic Church, and leave her kingdom under his dominion as she found it at the death of her sister, it is not improbable that she would have listened favorably to the friendly advice. But the pope denied the

legitimacy of her birth, as she was the daughter of Anne Boleyn, and hence her title to the crown. Elizabeth had no deep religious convictions, but she did have an intense desire to sit on her father's throne. The attitude of the Roman pontiff, and the state of parties at home, determined her choice. She chose to be a Protestant and wear the crown. She chose only Protestants to be her counsellors. On their faithfulness she could rely, while she knew that sincere Catholics would be subject to the authority of the Roman pontiff. Cecil, who was a decided friend to the Reformation and enemy to the papacy, was made secretary and her most trusty counsellor. This wise and accomplished statesman was chiefly instrumental in shaping the general policy of the court, and especially in the reformation of the Church. He reasoned as Somerset and Cranmer had done in the time of Edward VI. His aim was to make as few changes as possible in the externals of religion. He reasoned as a statesman and not as a theologian. He wished to deliver his country from all allegiance to a foreign priesthood, to give the people the pure Word of God in their own language, and remove from the Church everything that favored gross superstition and vice. The policy that would accomplish all his aims

was to restore the institutions of Edward VI., which the late queen had abolished. Elizabeth would have been contented with a return to the policy of Henry VIII., and re-establish the Catholic Church, minus the pope. She felt fully competent to preside over all ecclesiastical affairs without control from any source. She had been accustomed to the forms and usages of the Catholic Church in her childhood and during the reign of Mary, and there was nothing in the Catholic system she specially disliked but the supremacy of the pope. She was anxious to dethrone the Roman pontiff, but perfectly willing to occupy his seat in the Anglican Church. She loved pomp and a gorgeous ritual, but had little or no conception of the religion of the heart. The historian, Green, perhaps did not exaggerate when he wrote: "No woman ever lived who was so utterly destitute of the sentiment of religion. While the world around her was swayed more and more by religious beliefs and controversies, Elizabeth was absolutely untouched by them." Such a ruler could not have any sympathy with the Puritans, whose whole nature was under the dominion of religious sentiments and convictions, and who were anxious only to secure the favor of a mightier potentate than the Queen of England. In her

estimation the Church was a creation of the state, a subject of the crown, and any want of conformity to the royal will was disloyalty and rebellion.

When the subject of reforming the Church was under consideration, the real Protestants, who had consented to a temporizing policy in the days of Edward, contended that the time had come for a complete reformation. They clamored for the removal of every vestige of popery, and an organization of the Church according to the pattern of the New Testament. The late persecution had deepened their opposition to everything that savored of popery. The exiles, who had sojourned on the Continent during the Marian persecution, had fallen in love with a more simple form of worship they had witnessed at Geneva and in other places. They wished the Church of England to imitate the best reformed churches on the Continent. These people were afterwards nick-named Puritans. Had the queen been left to the guidance of her own preference, she would have restored the Church to the status in which it was at the death of Henry VIII. Had the Puritans ruled, it would have been modelled after the Geneva pattern, as they were beginning to do in Scotland.

Cecil and the statesmen who stood around the

queen persuaded her, as head of the Church, to assent to the restoration of all the enactments in the time of Edward. Some trivial changes were made. The forty-two articles were reduced to thirty-nine. The prayer-book was made less offensive to the Catholics, and consequently less acceptable to Puritans. But in all essentials the Church was again reformed according to the model of Somerset and Cranmer. (And such she has continued to be ever since). The chief controversy at first was about ceremonies, such as kneeling at the sacrament, the sign of the cross in baptism, the vestments of the officiating minister, the popish ceremonies in ordinations, and similar practices borrowed from Rome, but not authorized by the Word of God. The question about the divine right of bishops was not agitated till towards the close of the century, when Bancroft, Bishop of London, preached a sermon to prove that bishops were a distinct order divinely instituted. That where there was no bishop there was no church, and there were no valid ordinations. This doctrine was new to both the prelatic and Puritan party when first preached by Bancroft. Whitgift, the great adversary of the Puritans, said he rather wished than believed the doctrine to be true. Until the new departure

was proposed by Bancroft, Episcopacy was defended on the grounds of expediency, more than on that of divine appointment. The Puritans were not separatists. They desired and expected only one national church. The idea of distinct organizations, as they were tolerated and sprung up in a subsequent age, was something about which they had no conception. Their idea was an established Church, but constituted according to the gospel pattern. When they could not obtain their wishes, they were still willing to remain in the established Church, but wished to observe or omit or depart from her prescribed forms, and follow the Word of God as their own judgment might dictate. This the queen absolutely forbade. She was determined to have perfect uniformity in doctrines and outward observances in every part of the kingdom. All were required to kneel at the Lord's table, to make the sign of the cross in baptism, to attend worship in their own parish. The robes and cap and official dress of the bishop and vestments of the officiating minister were prescribed by law. The prescribed prayers and Scripture lessons must be read in the public service. There were many things in the liturgy and usages of the Church to which many were opposed, and could not conscientiously observe.

The queen could not understand their motives. She could see nothing in their conduct but disloyalty and rebellion. A court of High Commission was instituted, whose function was to enforce uniformity, and punish all recusants by fines, imprisonment or suspension from office. Archbishop Parker became the ruling spirit in this court and the harsh executor of the queen's will. Neel gives the melancholy details, the suffering and distress occasioned by the iron hand of power in the effort to enforce uniformity.

After the death of Parker, Grindal was made archbishop. His sympathies were with the persecuted. But the queen was offended at his levity, and for some years he was imprisoned in his own house, and not permitted to officiate in public. Grindal was succeeded in office by Whitgift. This man excelled Parker in remorseless severity against the non-conformists. He had distinguished himself as defender of the Church in a controversy with Cartwright, who defended the Puritans, advocated the Presbyterian form of worship and discipline, and condemned prelacy and whatever he regarded as relics of popery in the Anglican Church. Cartwright was fined, imprisoned, spent some years in exile, and his old age in poverty and obscurity,

though he was one of the first men of his age in learning, talent and piety. Some of the Puritans attempted to separate from the establishment, and organize a church on the Presbyterian plan. This movement was suppressed by the strong arm of power. As many of the best preachers were silenced, and incompetent occupants of the pulpit succeeded them, there was an attempt to remedy the evil by what was called "prophesyings." The suspended ministers would meet the people in private houses and instruct them in the doctrines of the Bible. Ministers and people would meet in large assemblies to propose and answer difficult questions. The queen feared the consequences of such meetings, and had them suppressed. The rights of conscience were everywhere disregarded during the reign of Elizabeth. The press was also fettered, and no book was permitted to be published without license. A minister by the name of Stubbs published a pamphlet that criticised freely a contemplated marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon. For this offence the right hands of the writer and publisher of the book were cut off with an axe. When his right arm fell on the block, Stubbs pulled off his hat with his left hand and cried, "God save the queen." But the

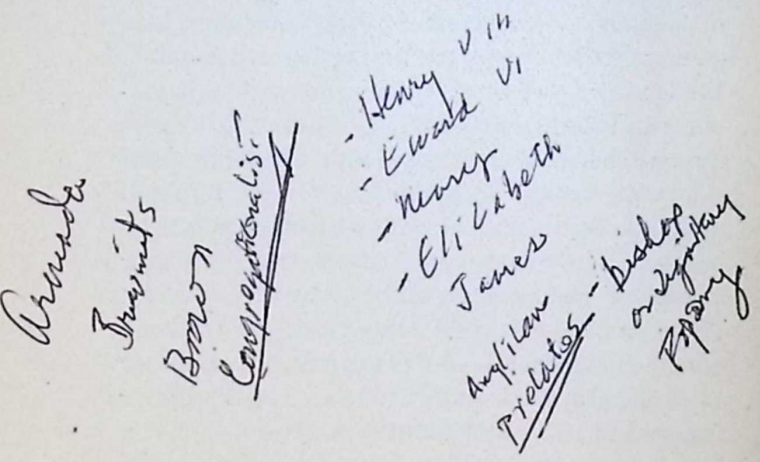
Church was fiercely attacked from a hidden press. A series of tracts were secretly published under the signature of Marprelate. The press was finally discovered, and some of the parties put to death. Hundreds of ministers were imprisoned, many deprived of office and reduced to poverty by fines and litigation. The statesmen who were counsellors of the queen, such as Lord Burleigh and Walsingham, acted a more friendly part towards the persecuted Puritans than the prelates. The Parliament more than once manifested a disposition to relieve the persecuted party. But the queen regarded such interposition as an interference with her supremacy in all ecclesiastical affairs.

Elizabeth was in many respects a great queen. She loved power, and had peculiar tact for governing her subjects. Her situation made her the head of the Protestant interest in all Europe. She assisted the Protestants in Scotland, France, and Holland in their various struggles with the Catholic powers. There were plots for her assassination, in the courts of France, Spain, and the Vatican, to deprive her of her crown and to bestow it upon Mary of Scotland. At length Philip II. of Spain fitted out the most powerful fleet that modern Europe had ever seen for the

invasion of England. The defeat of the invincible Armada, as it was called, saved the Protestantism of all Europe, and was one of the glorious events of the reign of this queen. All these circumstances united the Protestants of England to lend a willing support to the crown, and, notwithstanding her persecuting measures, Elizabeth was generally popular with the people. A rash enthusiast, by the name of Browne, attempted to organize a church according to the Congregational system during this reign. He travelled over the kingdom denouncing the Church of England as the mother of abominations, and calling on the people to forsake her communion. He and his followers, after suffering imprisonment and fines, sought refuge in Holland. There Browne became disgusted with the church of which he was the spiritual father. He returned to England, became reconciled to the church he had so bitterly denounced, and served as rector in one of her parishes till the day of his death. His followers, whom he left in exile in Holland, obtained a charter from King James, the successor of Elizabeth, and sailed in the Mayflower for America in 1620, and, landing at Plymouth Rock, founded the first English settlement in New England. These people at first were called Brownists.

They were not the Puritans who acted so distinguished a part in English history. Those of whom we write were not in favor of schism, and were as much opposed to the Brownists as to prelacy. They did not persuade people to leave the church, but to reform it.

In the year 1603, at an advanced age, after a long and prosperous reign, Queen Elizabeth passed that bourne whence no traveller returns, and James I. of Scotland received the crown.



CHAPTER V.

State of Parties in the Reign of James the First.

JAMES I. of England, but the sixth who bore that name on the throne of Scotland, was the son of the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots, and of Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, Earl of Lennox, and a lineal descendant of Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. of England. He was an infant when the revolution occurred which forced his mother to abdicate the throne. The crown was immediately placed on the head of the royal infant, and a regency was appointed to govern the kingdom during his minority. The young king was educated in the Protestant faith, according to the Presbyterian standard as then established in Scotland. In early life he professed unbounded admiration for the church which John Knox had so zealously labored to have organized after the gospel pattern. He once said, in an address before the General Assembly, that it was "the purest Kirk in the world," and thanked God that he was born at such a time and place as to be

king of such a church. But James loved arbitrary power more than all things else, and regarded the church as his subject and a pillar of the throne. If the ministers of his much-loved kirk had been the sycophants of royalty, and had preached passive obedience to the people, his love of the kirk might have been as enduring as his love of power. But James Melville gave utterance to the sentiments of the great majority of the Scottish clergy, when he took the liberty of reminding his majesty that there were two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland, and that the Church owed allegiance first to King Jesus, and only secondly to King James, in all matters pertaining to religion. Such sentiments were very distasteful to the vain and despotic young king, who claimed absolute authority in both church and state. He feared there was a republican virus in Presbyterianism, and a predilection for Episcopacy was the result. A favorite saying in after life was, "no bishop, no king." In the Hampton Court conference he declared that "Presbytery agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil." (Neel, Vol. II., p. 13.)

But the Puritans, knowing that James had been educated in the Presbyterian faith, entertained great hopes that he would show them some favor,

and alleviate their sufferings. They drew up a petition for redress, which was signed by more than eight hundred clergymen. The number might have been increased by hundreds more, if the privilege of signing it had been afforded to all the Puritan ministers. But many in whole counties never saw it. It was called the millenary petition, as they supposed more than a thousand would sign it. There were counter-petitions sent by the prelatic party. The king, under pretext of giving both parties an impartial hearing, called a conference, to be held at Hampton Court. But in selecting the disputants, he made it very manifest that he favored the prelatic party, and managed to give them an easy victory. To plead the cause of the Church, he appointed nine bishops, five deans and two doctors of divinity. Archbishop Whitgift, the cruel persecutor of the Puritans, along with Bancroft, the most intolerant, bigoted and sycophantic of the prelatic party, were prominent actors in the farce.

Only four speakers were chosen to plead the cause of the despised Puritans; but as only Dr. Reynolds was a conspicuous speaker in the debate, it might be truly said that only one man was called to confront the frowning vanity of the king, who was a chief speaker in the conference,

and the arrogance and ridicule of the sixteen robed dignitaries of the Church of England. Neel's history of the conference excites pity and disgust at the vanity of the king and the arrogance and sycophancy of some of the prelates. Bancroft, falling on his knees before the king, when his words were pleasing to the sycophant, exclaimed: "I protest; my heart melteth for joy, that Almighty God, of his singular mercy, has given us such a king as since Christ's time hath not been." Another said, "He had never seen the king and priest so fully united in one person." When the king spoke something that delighted Archbishop Whitgift, he exclaimed, "Undoubtedly your Majesty speaks by the especial assistance of God's Spirit." Think of all such flattery to a monarch whom Dickens justly pictures in the words we quote: "Our cousin of Scotland was ugly, awkward, and shuffling, both in mind and person. His tongue was much too large for his mouth, his legs were much too weak for his body, and his dull goggle eyes stared and rolled like an idiot's. He was cunning, covetous, wasteful, idle, drunken, greedy, dirty, cowardly, a great swearer, and the most conceited man on earth." The historian Knight says of this conference: "Royalty never degraded itself in a more undig-

nified manner, and Episcopacy never degraded itself with more servility of royalty." When Dr. Reynolds had fully stated his objections to certain features and customs of the Church of England, and indicated the changes he recommended, he was dismissed with the admonition, "If this is all your party have to say, I will make them conform, or I will *harry* them out of this land, or else worse." The result of the conference was that the prelatic party felt themselves at liberty to harass and persecute the Puritans to the utmost extent of their power. The Court of High Commission, and that of the Star Chamber, became engines of cruelty in the hands of intolerant bigots. But some good was effected by the conference as an offset to the evil. Dr. Reynolds used the occasion to urge upon the king the desirableness of a revision of the sacred Scriptures. There had been six versions of the Bible previous to the reign of James I., Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthews', Cranmer's, the Bishops', and the Genevan. The two latter were rivals for the favor of the Church. The prelatic party advocated the claims of the Bishops' Bible, the Puritans the Genevan version. The king cherished a special aversion to the Geneva Bible, because the notes seemed to indicate that subjects might justly rebel against

the authority of a tyrant, and it also favored presbytery. He consented to provide for a new revision, and the common version, which soon supplanted all its predecessors, was published in 1611.

The Catholics also petitioned for a redress of grievances. As no satisfactory response was given, a few desperate spirits resolved to seek redress by the destruction of both king and Parliament. This conspiracy is known as the "Gun Powder Plot." Thirty-six barrels of powder were secreted beneath the Parliament house, and a fanatic was ready to apply the match when the doomed parties might assemble. The horrid plot was discovered on the eve of execution. Guy Fawkes was arrested, and made a full confession of the atrocious crime he was ready to perpetrate. When asked by the king what induced him to engage in a conspiracy so shocking and fiendish, he coolly replied, "that desperate diseases required desperate remedies" He and a host of the conspirators were executed.

Bancroft succeeded Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury. Under his arbitrary rule the Puritans found no favor. Many of the most learned, pious and useful ministers were deprived of their benefices, and reduced to poverty for non-conformity. No one could be ordained or inducted

into a benefice who refused to approve of all the doctrines, rites and government of the established Church. Bancroft published a book of canons containing one hundred and forty-one articles, which was adopted by the two houses of convocation, and enforced by letters patent from the king. Thousands of the best ministers in the church had scruples about subscribing to new laws that seemed either unscriptural or cruel to those who dissented. But the bishops were required to demand a subscription from all the clergy. The Court of High Commission punished all dissenters. Hundreds were deprived or excommunicated, some imprisoned or fined, others put to death for trivial offences. Others went into voluntary exile to avoid persecution. The most unworthy often conformed and lived in ease or luxury, while a better class suffered from poverty or imprisonment. Vices that admit of no defense often went unrebuked, while a refusal to kneel at the sacramental table, to make the sign of the cross in baptism, or wear the prescribed habits, or to observe such ceremonies as the Puritans disapproved, was treated as a gross sin. The unpardonable sin was non-conformity; all other sins were small in comparison. No amount of learning or piety could atone for vol-

untary dissent. A large amount of ignorance, incompetency, and even vice, were tolerated in those who conformed. If James had shown due respect for the customs and institutions of England, his persecuting measures to enforce uniformity of worship would have been more successful. But he disregarded all the privileges of Parliament, and the rights of his subjects. He claimed absolute power, and seemed incapable of learning that Englishmen had rights that were guarded by law, and not at the mercy of a tyrant's will. The Parliament opposed his tyranny, and reminded him that the power of the king had some limitation in the kingdom that gave him the crown.

The Parliament was prorogued when they uttered complaints, and sought the redress of public grievances. When successive Parliaments still proved refractory, he attempted to rule without the aid of such an assembly, and to replenish his treasury by illegal methods of taxation. Patriotic statesmen saw that his aim was to establish a despotism and destroy the liberty they regarded as the heritage of Englishmen. His government became very unpopular with a large part of the nobility and gentry. The prelatic party sided with the king, the Puritans with the Parliament and

the friends of liberty. The bishops preached passive obedience on the part of the subject as duty before God. The Puritan leaders plead for a pure Church, a free Parliament and constitutional liberty, the reign of law and not the arbitrary will of a despot. Religion and politics became closely allied. The struggle for religious liberty enabled them to see more clearly the nature and the need of civil liberty, and contend more earnestly for the rights of man. The arbitrary measures of the court and the sycophancy of the prelates and their adherents, made the Puritans the popular party in the kingdom. A powerful party among the nobility and gentry adopted Puritanic opinions. The Parliament became more bold in its opposition to the court. When members of Parliament were elected, Puritanic candidates were chosen by the electors. Thus two great parties arose in the days of James, and an irrepressible conflict began, which in the next reign resulted in civil war.

Not satisfied with enforcing uniformity in England, James undertook the more difficult task of forcing Episcopacy on Scotland. He found the Scotch a more stubborn race than the English, and he found there no prelatic party to second his efforts. But he made a beginning, and found tools among the nobility and a few faithless clergy-

men to lend a helping hand to his reckless innovations. The great body of the Scotch Presbyterians offered a stern resistance to the royal will, and rallied to the defence of the Church of their choice. But James died when the opposition to his arbitrary measures in church and state was becoming more and more intense. He sowed the wind from which his ill-starred son reaped the cyclone that swept over the land.

CHAPTER VI.

The Triumph of Puritanism under Charles the First.

CHARLES was a wiser king than his father, but he inherited lofty conceptions of the divine right of kings. He also learned from his father to regard deception and king craft as a part of the royal prerogative. Bad counsellors encouraged him to abide by the teaching of a misguided parent. He was espoused to Henrietta, daughter of the King of France, who was a bigoted Catholic, and who had learned in the court of her father to regard the king as above all law. The spirit of liberty was on the increase in England. The tyranny of James had forced the people to investigate the rights both of kings and subjects. The contest for religious liberty enabled them to see more clearly their civil rights. The first three Parliaments that were called by Charles proved refractory, and were speedily prorogued when they opposed the wishes of the king. When the third Parliament was dismissed, some of the members were imprisoned for complaining too freely

of the grievances under which the nation labored. There was soon heard the murmur of discontent at the measures of the court all over the kingdom. There was a variety of causes which alienated the minds of the people from the sovereign, and finally ended in a bloody conflict. Sir John Elliot died in prison after a four years' confinement. His only offence was freedom of speech and a patriotic defence of constitutional liberty. John Hampton suffered a long imprisonment for the same reason.

Charles endeavored to dispense with Parliaments and reign as an absolute monarch. For twelve years no Parliament assembled, and money was raised for the king's treasury by new and illegal methods of taxation. It is no part of this narrative to enter into details about benevolences, forced loans, ship money, unjust fines, and all the ways and means the king devised to replenish his exhausted treasury in the absence of a Parliament. But the course pursued by the king awakened a deep feeling of fear and indignation among the nobility and all parties who loved liberty and hated despotism.

The king's counsellors were very unpopular, and their continuance in office increased the general discontent. The Duke of Buckingham

was the chief counsellor of the king in the first years of his reign. This man had been raised from an humble position by James I. to the highest place of honor in the gift of the king. He had no merit, except graceful manners, beauty of person, and a genius for sycophancy. He was haughty and arrogant before the public, but cringing and servile to his royal master. He fell by the knife of an assassin, who sought revenge for some private grievance. But a more formidable enemy to liberty and law became his successor, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. During the life of Buckingham he was one of the most daring and eloquent leaders of the Puritan party. After the death of that royal favorite, he accepted office under the king, and soon became the most bitter enemy of the party he had abandoned. His abilities were of the highest order; he was eloquent, well-informed, fearless, unscrupulous, far-seeing, and untiring in energy. Arbitrary power never had a more powerful ally, nor liberty a more dangerous foe than Wentworth. After his apostasy, the single aim of his life was to establish despotism on a sure foundation, and subjugate all authority in church and state to the will of the monarch. Wentworth found a powerful tool for his purpose in William Laud, Arch-

bishop of Canterbury. Laud embraced, with enthusiasm and intense zeal, the dogma first taught in the Church of England by Bancroft, that bishops constitute a distinct order above the elder, and are essential to a church organization. He adopted the Arminian system of theology, though all his predecessors had been Calvinists, according to the type of the thirty-nine articles. Laud also showed a decided leaning towards popish usages that the Reformers had abandoned. He would have gladly made the Church what it was under Henry VIII. The pope sent him a cardinal's hat, supposing he needed only a little coaxing to seek reconciliation with Rome. His innovations, of a popish tendency, alarmed the Puritans, and drove many moderate churchmen into their ranks. There was nothing true Protestants feared in that day more than popery. They remembered the gunpowder plot, the Spanish Armada, the plots to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, and the burnings under the bloody Mary. They were also familiar with the report of a Catholic league to extirpate the Protestant churches in all Europe. The thirty years' war in Germany for this purpose was scarcely over. The story of Alva's cruelty in Holland and the Netherlands was fresh in the memory of the people. Fox's

"Book of Martyrs" was in almost every household. The Church of Rome was regarded as the mother of harlots and as drunk with the blood of saints. While Laud and his popish innovations were exciting the hopes of Catholics and fears of Protestants, the nation was rendered almost frantic by the news from Ireland. Irish Catholics had risen in rebellion and commenced an indiscriminate slaughter of the Protestant population. Men, women, and children shared the same fate. There is nothing more shocking in the history of savage warfare than the atrocious crimes of the infuriated Irish in that rebellion. The victims of their fury are variously estimated; some say a hundred, some fifty thousand.

The Courts of High Commission and the Star Chamber were engines of cruelty and oppression in the hands of power. The official members of these courts acted as if their chief end was to please the king and enjoy his favor. When an accused party was brought before them they seemed to act in the spirit of the Highland soldier on the eve of battle. According to Burns they only asked—

> "King Charles' will,
> And where's the foe;
> And only studied how to kill
> Two at a blow."

Alexander Leighton wrote a book in which he spoke in bitter language of the abuses and evil practices of the national Church. He was summoned before the Court of the Star Chamber and found guilty. As a punishment he was carried to Westminster and received thirty-nine lashes on his bare back. One ear was then cut off, one nostril split with a knife, and one cheek branded with a red-hot iron. After standing in the pillory two hours, he was carried back to prison. As soon as his wounds were sufficiently healed, he was again carried to Cheapside, that other places might witness that the way of the transgressor is hard. Then the whipping was repeated, and also the branding and ear cutting. He was then fined a thousand pounds and sentenced to imprisonment for life. After ten years of confinement in prison, the aged sufferer was released by an act of the Long Parliament. When this atrocious sentence was pronounced on the unhappy man by his infamous judges, Laud took off his holy bishop's cap, and returned thanks to Almighty God for the faithfulness of the court. Prynne, a lawyer, Bostwick, a physician, and Burton, a minister of the Church, for similar offences, received a similar punishment.* They were all consigned

* The sentence of the Earl of Dorset against Prynne, as reported by Neel, Vol. II., page 278, is as follows:

to separate prisons on the distant islands of Scilly, Guernsey and Jersey. They were all, in after years, delivered by the same Parliament.

It is painful to read or record the proceedings of the courts in those days of tyranny. Neel enters into details in his history of the Puritans. All good men were shocked at the enormities committed in the name of law and religion. The principles of the Puritans became more popular by the sufferings of these martyrs, and the party which perpetrated or justified such enormities became more odious.

While murmuring and discontent pervaded all England, by a strange infatuation the king determined to complete what James had begun, and force prelacy upon Scotland. This was no doubt

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"Mr. Prynne, I declare you to be a schism-maker in the church, a sedition-sower in the commonwealth, a wolf in sheep's clothing; in a word, *omnium malorum ne quissimus*. I shall fine him ten thousand pounds, which is more than he is worth, but less than he deserves. I will not set him at liberty, no more than a plagued man or a mad dog, who, though he can't bite, will foam. He is fit to live in dens with such beasts of prey as wolves and tigers like himself. Therefore I condemn him to perpetual imprisonment, and for corporal punishment, I would have him branded on the forehead, slit in the nose, and have his ears chopt off."

undertaken by the advice of Laud. The archbishop prepared a liturgy for Scotland more offensive to the Presbyterians than that of England. The king, without consulting the General Assembly or any ecclesiastical body in Scotland, appointed bishops to rule the Church and enforce the innovations suggested by Laud. The people of Scotland were seized with amazement and indignation when they heard of the rude assault upon their sacred rights. They recognized Charles as their lawful king, but not as head of the Church. A minister, clad in priestly robes, entered the pulpit of the Church of St. Giles and began to intone the liturgy of Laud. Jennie Geddes rose and hurled the stool on which she sat at the head of the offending intruder. The meeting ended in a tumult. This was the first and only time in which Laud's liturgy was seen in a Scottish pulpit.

Alexander Henderson drew up a document known in history as the Solemn League and Covenant, in which the signers pledged to labor for the extirpation of popery, prelacy, heresy, superstition, and all that was opposed to righteousness and truth. It was signed with enthusiasm by thousands in Edinburgh. Copies were multiplied and sent to all parts of the kingdom. Some en-

thusiasts opened their veins and signed the covenant with their blood. All Scotland seemed on fire and moved by a common impulse. When the report of this movement reached the king, he called it rebellion, and marched at the head of an army to suppress it. All Scotland flew to arms, and prepared to meet the invader. When Charles entered Scotland, he found an army more formidable than his own encamped on Denslow Heath. The words in flaming characters were inscribed on their banners "FOR CHRIST AND HIS CROWN." The strength and stern defiance of the Scottish army turned the thoughts of the English monarch towards peace. He proposed terms, which were accepted, and he returned to London. But the expense of his short campaign made it necessary to call a Parliament. No such body had met for twelve years, and the call greatly mitigated the discontent of the people. Most of the boroughs chose Puritan representatives to the House of Commons. The House of Lords was composed of nobles who were opposed to all the illegal acts of the king, but it was less Puritanic than the House of Commons.

This Parliament, like its predecessors, refused to grant supplies unless there was first a redress of the grievances under which the nation groaned.

A speedy dismissal was the result, and again the king resorted to illegal and arbitrary methods of raising money. The terms of peace with Scotland being violated by his majesty, the war was renewed, and a Scottish army crossed the border and pitched their tents on English soil. Fresh negotiations began, and the hostile army waited at Newcastle. His majesty was now compelled to summons a Parliament and yield to their demands. This call brought together the Long Parliament, the most memorable assembly of the kind that has ever met in England. Statesmen of no ordinary ability, courage and integrity, became the leaders of Parliament. The names of Pym, Vane, Hollis, Cromwell, Selden and others will shine as stars in English history. The bishops had a seat in the House of Lords, which made that body less Puritanic, and encouraged the hopes of the king and his party. But the lords temporal were at one with the commons in opposition to the arbitrary measures of the crown.

The first acts of this memorable Parliament was to strip the king of his arbitrary power and increase that of the legislative body. They forced the crown to surrender the right of proroguing the Parliament, and made their adjournment a volun-

tary act. This was a matter of vital importance, as it limited the power of the court and conferred on the representatives of the people authority almost supreme in the government.

The struggle between the king and Parliament soon ended in civil war. When his majesty found his authority fettered by legal enactments, he resolved to vindicate his royal rights by an appeal to the sword. He summoned the friends of despotism to rally beneath his standard, and charged all the adherents of Parliament with treason and rebellion. A long and bloody conflict followed, which it is not the aim of this narrative to recount.

A very serious question at this crisis was forced upon the attention of Parliament. Petitions numerously signed were sent from various parts of the kingdom, urging a reformation of the church and the abolition, "root and branch, of hierarchy as established." The Puritans, goaded to desperation by the tyranny of Laud, and alarmed at his popish innovations, clamored for a pure church, moulded after the gospel pattern. The Christian statesmen who now stood at the helm and guided the vessel of state knew that the prelates had abused their ecclesiastical authority, that they had encouraged the king in his

assumption of absolute power; that they had preached passive obedience as the duty of the oppressed, and that the purest and most competent ministers had been fined, imprisoned, deprived or forced into exile, while the time-serving and incompetent lived in honor and ease or luxury. After mature deliberation, the resolution was adopted to abolish the hierarchical system as established by law, and call an Assembly of Divines as an advisory court, that, guided by their wisdom, they might remodel the church according to the Word of God. The resolution passed both houses of Parliament September 1, 1640. November 5, 1643, was designated as the day when the government of the church by archbishops, bishops, deans, chapters, etc., should cease. Those in authority had notice more than a year in advance of the expiration of their office. In the following June they passed an ordinance calling an assembly to meet at Westminster July 1, 1643.

The ordinance abolishing Episcopacy left each minister in charge of his own parish church, but left no ecclesiastical authority over the pastor. But this was done on the supposition that a new system of church government would be elaborated and adopted before the time allotted to the old should expire.

A due consideration of a few facts will enable the reader to form a rational judgment of the conduct of Parliament, and of the Westminster Assembly :

1. There had been a respectable party in the Church of England from the days of Edward VI., who regarded the English reformation as incomplete, and waited in hope to see the prelatic system abolished or greatly modified, and many rites and usages, which survived as relics of the papacy, utterly abandoned. The great leaders in Parliament were converts to such opinions.

2. Experience convinced many that prelacy was a natural foe to liberty and the friend of despotism, and that King James was right when he said, "No bishop, no king." The bishops had uniformly sided with the party who trampled on all the rights of Englishmen, which so cruelly oppressed and persecuted the Puritans. Archbishops Parker, Whitgift, Bancroft, and Laud had all favored persecution, but the one last mentioned had excelled his predecessors in cruelty and oppression. The friends of liberty believed that Episcopacy, as established, was the citadel and bulwark of despotism.

3. As previously stated, there was nothing so

much feared in that day as the papal power. This fear was increased by the popish innovations introduced by Laud. It was believed that the prelatic system had an inherent tendency towards Rome, and that the days of Mary might return unless it was abolished. There was a Catholic league for the extirpation of the Protestant religion. Germany had been drenched in blood by a thirty years' war. There was urgent need of a closer union among Protestants; but when such an alliance was almost a necessity, the policy of Laud was to separate the Church of England from her Protestant sisters on the Continent, and bring her nearer to the Church of Rome. Her position was anomalous and absurd. While she was excommunicated at Rome, she strangely turned and hurled anathemas at her Protestant sisters. She bowed respectfully to the harlot mother who heaped curses and abuse on her as a wayward child, but turned away with arrogance and scorn from the sisters who offered the hand of friendship and the kiss of affection. The desire of making the Church of England a more genuine member of the Protestant family had its influence on the decision of Parliament.

4. A separation of church and state was not

thought of in that age of the world. The right of the government to establish a church and preside over all her temporal interests was undisputed by those in power. The Catholic Church was established by law before the Reformation. It had been abolished as a state institution, and a reformed church substituted in its place by acts of Parliament. Schism was regarded as an intolerable evil. All parties were agreed as to the policy of having an established church. The question in dispute between prelatist and Puritan was, What shall that church be? Shall the old frame of the Catholic Church still stand, with many relics of superstition clinging to it, or shall the old building be reconstructed after the gospel model? Nobody then anticipated the harmonious existence of several distinct organizations in the same country.

The members of Parliament did not claim to be theologians or skilled in ecclesiastical lore. Hence an assembly of divines was called as an advisory court. They saw a necessity for a reformation in the Church, but were willing to ask the advice and consent of the professed teachers of religion as to the character and extent of the proposed reform. They also desired a national

church that would include Ireland and Scotland, as well as England and Wales. They cherished the hope that on a scriptural basis there might be one church and uniformity of doctrine and worship for the English-speaking race. They aimed to accomplish a noble end, but time has proved it to be impracticable.

CHAPTER VII.

The Westminster Assembly.

THE Assembly met July 1, 1643. It was composed of one hundred and twenty-one divines, ten lords, and twenty commons. The divines were not chosen on account of known opinions or predilections, but for a reputation for wisdom, learning and piety. Various shades of opinion appeared among the members of this venerable tribunal. About twenty of those chosen by act of Parliament were decided friends of the establishment as it was. The rest were of Puritan proclivities. Very few of the zealous Episcopalians accepted the invitation given them. All the members of the Assembly were communicants in the Church of England, and all the ministers had received Episcopal ordination. There was not at first a single member of a Presbyterian church in the Assembly. A few of them, who had been refugees in Holland, had there become ministers among the Independents or Congregationalists. In the following autumn six delegates were received from the Church of Scotland. These never

had the right to vote, but were permitted to take part in the debates. Hence it is worthy of notice, that the Confession and other standards of the Presbyterian Church were adopted by members of the Anglican Church. The six delegates from Scotland had no voice when the vote was taken. It was desired by parties on both sides of the Tweed that the Church of Scotland should be represented in the Assembly. Accordingly the Parliament sent commissioners to Edinburgh, and invited the General Assembly of the Scottish Church and the Convention of Estates to send representatives to Westminster, and unite in an effort to bring about uniformity in the churches of the two kingdoms. The English commissioners discovered, by intercourse with leading men in Scotland, that the fear of prelacy was the only barrier to a league that the Parliament greatly desired in that juncture of affairs, and that the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant on the part of Parliament and the Assembly would allay all uneasiness in the public mind. A copy was sent to London, and on due examination met with universal approval by the parties concerned. On a day appointed, it was read before both bodies assembled together. After the reading, they all rose to their feet, and, with their right

hand lifted to heaven, gave a solemn assent to the covenant. The members of the House of Commons and of the Assembly then affixed their names on separate rolls. The House of Lords adopted the covenant at a subsequent period. After this solemn transaction, the six delegates from Scotland appeared and took their seats in the Assembly at Westminster. Four of these were ministers, two were elders. The ministers were Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, and Robert Baillie. The elders were Lord Maitland, afterwards Earl of Lauderdale, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston.

The presence of the commissioners from Scotland gave a wider and nobler aim to the deliberations of the assembly. Their aim was henceforth not only to heal divisions in England, but the organic union of all the Protestants in the British isles. The assembly had no civil or ecclesiastical authority. Their power was only advisory. The power of legislation in reference to their counsel and advice belonged exclusively to Parliament. But they labored to be faithful witnesses before God on all subjects prepared for their consideration. The following vow was taken by all who took their seats as members of the

advisory convention, and it was read in the hearing of the assembly once every week: "I, ——, do seriously promise and vow, in the presence of Almighty God, that in this assembly of which I am a member, I will maintain nothing in point of doctrine but what I believe to be most agreeable to the Word of God; nor in point of discipline but what I shall conceive to conduce most to the glory of God and the good and peace of his Church." They perilled their lives and fortunes when they met as servants of Parliament and in defiance of the king's command, who by proclamation forbade the assembly. Who can doubt their sincerity? They lived at a time when the Bible was the one book that all England read. The literature that fills our libraries at the present day was not then written. The Word of God was the chief literary treasure of the people. The great battle between the papists and Protestants, between Puritans and Unitarians, Arminians and Calvinists, and on all Church questions, had been ably fought. Almost all possible questions in theology had been fully discussed by theological giants when the convention met at Westminster. Their views on doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions manifest the settled convictions of the wisest and purest men of that age, both in England and

on the continent, after more than a century of earnest controversy. Their first work was a directory of worship. This was adopted by Parliament, and was substituted in many congregations for the liturgy of the Episcopal Church.

This work occasioned very little controversy. There was also great unanimity on all doctrinal questions which are embodied in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. They spent much time on each chapter and paragraph of the Confession, and each question and answer of the Longer and Shorter Catechisms. They aimed to avoid all obscurity and redundancy, as well as error. They were mostly, if not all, Calvinists, and they produced the most luminous and logical summary of that system of belief ever published. There were, however, in that venerable body advocates of a higher and lower Calvinism. Between the supralapsarians and sublapsarians there was some conflict. The language of the Confession and Catechisms is often the result of a compromise between these parties. It can be fitted to the peculiar views of either party. This also enables the enemies of the Presbyterian Church to extract an offensive meaning from the words of her standards. Our creed is Calvinistic. The doctrinal system embodied in the Westminster

standards is the most luminous, logical and consistent summary of the Calvinistic faith ever published. It is worthy of and it has ever commanded the highest admiration of those whose minds and hearts were capable of appreciating their excellence. But the Presbyterians who have adopted it have been generally moderate Calvinists. A literature, apologetic and expository, has grown up in defence of these symbols of faith, which show how they have been interpreted by their friends. The interpretation forced on them by enemies often misleads the ignorant, grieves the pious, but at the same time signalizes the shameful ignorance or malice of the authors.

When the subject of church government and discipline came up for discussion, the existence of three parties became manifest. The large majority were Presbyterian in sentiment. There was also an Erastian party, led by the learned Selden, who were disciples of Erastus, a physician of Heidelburg, who had published a book on ecclesiastical government. His view was that all discipline should be left to the civil magistrate, and that the sole work of the minister should be to teach and administer the sacraments. This party, though led by so learned, amiable, and influential a character as Selden, found very little favor in

the Assembly, but met with powerful friends in Parliament.

The third party was the Independent or Congregational. It controlled only ten or twelve votes in the Assembly, but the leaders were men of talent, wisdom, and great force of character. They had fled to Holland to escape persecution at home, and attached themselves to the Brownists in that country. Persecution under the rule of prelacy had embittered their opposition so that they were driven to the extreme of Independency. They disputed every inch of ground with the Presbyterian party. Though a minority at Westminster, they had powerful friends in both houses of Parliament, in the army and in influential circles in other places. Cromwell, Vane, Lord Manchester, the illustrious Milton, and other distinguished leaders of public opinion, adopted the views of the Independents. They failed to carry the Assembly and the Parliament, but, being favored by the army, they finally triumphed by military violence.

The Presbyterian party in the Parliament were not republicans. They favored a constitutional monarchy, and hoped for a restoration of the king, to rule according to written laws with limited power. They adopted the ecclesiastical system

recommended by the Assembly of Divines, and undertook the reorganization of the church on the Presbyterian plan. When the Confession, Catechisms, Form of Government, and Discipline were laid before Parliament and adopted, the work for which the Assembly had been called was accomplished. This was all done after the Assembly had deliberated for more than four years. The Scottish commissioners then returned home. But as the Parliament was negotiating with the king for a settlement of all church questions, they required the Assembly to continue their sitting, that they might give advice in any emergency that might arise. Hence the Assembly had a nominal existence for two years after their proper work was done, but during this period they did nothing worthy of farther notice.

I shall close this narrative by giving a summary of important events that followed.

Oliver Cromwell organized, drilled, and disciplined the most remarkable army of which history has left any record. It was composed largely of religious enthusiasists. Many of the officers were preachers, and could fight the battles of the Lord, sing psalms, preach, and pray with equal zeal, courage, and skill. There was

no profanity, licentious conduct, or vice tolerated in that army of saints. The tents at night resounded with notes of sacred melody, the voice of prayer, or that of some enthusiastic expounder of the Word of God. They marched to battle chanting the psalms of David, and fought to conquer or die. Under the lead of Cromwell, that army never lost a battle. According to Macaulay, "The Puritan warriors, often surrounded with difficulties, sometimes contending against threefold odds, not only never failed to conquer, but never failed to destroy and break in pieces whatever force was opposed to them." But these stern warriors assumed the avocation of theologians and statesmen as well as soldiers. There was no question before Parliament, civil or ecclesiastical, however difficult or profound, about which they did not have decided convictions. A jealousy sprung up between the army and the Parliament. Republican sentiments prevailed among the Puritan soldiers. The doctrine of the Independents suited their democratic proclivities. A growing jealousy of Scotland and estrangement from their Northern allies prejudiced them more and more against Presbyterianism, and deepened their partiality for Independency. There were also complaints against the

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government on account of arrearages left unpaid. Some rash measures of Parliament, adopted in haste to restrain the alarming increase of heresy and promote uniformity, gave rise to a loud clamor in favor of toleration and against imaginary persecution. The final result was, the army marched to London, expelled all the members of Parliament who belonged to the Presbyterian party, and left only about sixty members, who sided with the Independents. This fragment of the Long Parliament, called the rump, adopted measures which led to the trial and execution of Charles I. The army became the ruling power in England, and usurped the authority of king and Parliament. A commonwealth was proclaimed, and Cromwell was made Lord Protector of the realm. This remarkable man ruled England for twelve years with a rod of iron; but, with all his faults, his administration marks a brilliant era in English history and entitles him to the admiration of posterity. After his death and the abdication of his son Richard, the Long Parliament, which had never been lawfully disbanded, assembled again, and finished the work that military violence had interrupted.* They re-

* Few writers have duly noticed the last acts of the Long Parliament when left free from any outside pres-

established the Presbyterian Church and granted toleration to those who conscientiously dissented. They adjourned in a lawful way, after appointing an election for a new Parliament.

Soon after this Charles II. was recalled from exile and crowned as king. The prelatic party soon recovered their lost power. Episcopacy was re-established. An act of uniformity was passed by the Parliament, and a subscription was required of all ministers which no honest Puritan could conscientiously make. In consequence of this cruel legislation two thousand ministers were driven from their pulpits and doomed to a life of suffering and poverty. A large majority of the ejected ministers were Presbyterians. Those who did not tamely submit were cast into prison. Many of the wisest and best men in the ministry, such as Baxter, Owen and Bunyan, were silenced. Bunyan lay twelve years in Bedford jail. The suffering was still greater in Scotland. Twenty-eight years of bitter persecution followed the re-

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sure or violence. Many have censured the whole body for the acts of the minority, when the major part and the Conservatives were forced from the house at the point of the bayonet. It has been also the fashion of partisan zeal to blame the Westminster Assembly for enactments of Parliament that savored of intolerance.

newed attempt to force Episcopacy on an unwilling people. Many faithful ministers and laymen were tortured with the boots and the thumbscrew, were imprisoned, exiled or executed on the gallows. When the people met for worship in the mountains, glens or secret places, they were slaughtered, scattered, or led away to prison by the dragoons of the bloody Claverhouse. When the licentious reign of Charles II. ended, a more bigoted and cruel tyrant succeeded him in the person of James II. The bigotry of James, who was a Catholic, and his manifest aim to restore popery, alarmed the prelates who preached passive obedience to the Puritans, but were not so passive when their own interests were jeopardized.

William, Prince of Orange, who was married to a daughter of the reigning monarch, was invited to come to the rescue of religion and liberty in Great Britain. He came, and by a bloodless revolution secured the crown. James II. fled to France. The days of persecution ended, the prison doors were opened, and the ejected ministers still living resumed their pulpits in old age. The toleration act gave security to all dissenters. William, Prince of Orange, was a Dutch Presbyterian. Since his day civil and religious liberty and the freedom of the press have been

the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race. The principle of religious liberty is embodied in the Confession of Faith; but it was secured to the people of Great Britain and her colonies, and made the inheritance of all who speak the English language, by the noble prince who believed the doctrines of the Westminster Confession.